

Notes on the History and Migration of Mary Ethel Wood's Ancestors: (v.2)

Mary Ethel Wood was born in Providence Township, Randolph County, NC, on October 26, 1892. Her father, William Anderson Wood, was also born in Providence Twp. and was listed as a farmer in the 1900, 1910, and 1920 census. William Anderson and his wife, Mary Ann Chamness, raised 6 children. Mary Ethel and Sarah became school teachers, Lillie became a nurse, and Robert (Bob) pursued a career in insurance.

The parents of William Anderson (Anderson LaFollette & Emma Lou Wood) are somewhat of a mystery. We have been unable to locate them in any of the census records. We do know that they were born in North Carolina based on William Anderson's responses in census documents mentioned above. Sam J. Ervin, Jr., wrote an article about the Wood family of Randolph County. His article says that they came from Plymouth County, Massachusetts, however, he does not mention Anderson LaFollette Wood, so we are not sure of the connection. The Wood family from Plymouth were emigrants from England in 1635. Their name was derived from the surname Atwood. More research needed.

Mary Ethel Wood graduated from Elon College and taught elementary school. I found it interesting that two of her daughters (Mary Ruth and Evelyn), one granddaughter (Jane Berrier), and a great-granddaughter (Molly Kepley Bostic), also became teachers in public school.

Although we have hit a dead end searching for the parents of Anderson LaFollette Wood, there were many Wood households in North Carolina in the 1700's. Early Rowan County records document Samuel Wood here in 1755. Also there were: Joseph and James in 1756, David and Robert in 1758, Andrew, John and Matthew in 1764, Abraham in 1784, Jarrett in 1787, Archibald and Ison in 1793, Isham and Vincent in 1795, and Daniel in 1799. There were eight Wood households in Randolph County in 1790. In contrast, the ancestors of Mary Ann Chamness are very well documented. Many of these families were Quakers in the Cane Creek community, near the current towns of Snow Camp and Liberty. This area is approximately where Guilford, Alamance, Randolph, and Chatham Counties come together. The ancestors of these families have been traced back to 200 AD, through Charlemagne and Attila the Hun.

Among the families that we are researching, only the individuals whose ancestors came from Montgomery and Randolph Counties are without German ancestors. In fact, it seems that 100% of their ancestors were from the British Isles. Being from Rowan County, I have always heard about the Great Wagon Road that lead settlers from Pennsylvania to the Piedmont. Apparently there was a different migration trail into Randolph and Montgomery Counties that these English speaking settlers used. More research required. Additional information is organized under the following surnames:

Beesom/Lamb/Dunn, Chamness/Cole, Mendenhall /Thomas, Pickett/Piggott/Hedgecock/Hitchcock, and Reynolds/Norton/Brown.

Beesom/Lamb/Dunn- The Beesom, Lamb, and Dunn families are related through Mary Ann Chamness. The Beesoms came to Randolph County from Chester County Pennsylvania. Their ancestors were settlers in Delaware and emigrants from Lancashire, England. The Lamb family came to Randolph County from Nansemond County, Virginia

(which is now part of Suffolk). Their ancestors were early settlers in Roxbury, MA and emigrants from England. We do not know much about Edith Lamb's mother, Mary Dunn, except that she was born in Alamance County, NC. There were no Dunns listed in Alamance County in the 1790 census, however there were numerous Dunn households in the state. The surname Dunn is of Irish origin derived from O'Dunn.

Chamness/Cole- Anthony Chamness is thought to be the father of most Chamness families in America. He was born February 5, 1713 in East Smithfield, London, England and landed in America in 1726 at age 13. In 1735, at the age of 22, he married Sarah Mary Cole and they settled in Frederick County, Maryland. About 1748, he moved his family south to Orange County, North Carolina (in an area that later became part of Chatham County). They lived in the community of the Cane Creek Monthly Meeting and were Quakers at that time. Sarah Mary died in 1773 and Anthony subsequently married 3 other women and had many more children.

Sarah Mary Cole's family had been in Maryland for two and one-half generations. Her great-grandfather emigrated from Devonshire, England about 1665.

Mendenhall/Thomas-These are two surnames of Guilford County settlers that migrated from Chester County, Pennsylvania. Hannah Mendenhall was the great-great grandmother of Mary Ann Chamness. This family migrated from a village in England that bears a similar name, Mildenhall. Hannah Mendenhall's mother, Hannah Thomas, who was born in Chester County, PA, descended from English emigrants that were of Welsh origin. The Thomas surname is still widespread in the piedmont. John W. Thomas, founder of Thomasville, and Perley A. Thomas, founder of Thomas Built Buses were possibly members of this family.

Pickett/Piggott/Hedgecock/Hitchcock -For the most part, these families were Quakers. They are the ancestors of Mary Ann Chamness and migrated from Maryland to the community of the Cane Creek Monthly Meeting. This Piggott family emigrated from England to America prior to 1689. Perhaps they were descendants of a William Piggott that settled in Virginia in 1654. Hannah Coffin Hedgecock was the grandmother of Mary Ann Chamness. Her ancestors migrated from England to America prior to 1735. There were several early settlers in New England and Virginia with the Hedgecock/Hitchcock surname.

Reynolds/Norton/Brown-Amy Reynolds was the great-great-grandmother of Mary Ethel Wood. Amy was born in Guilford County in 1775. Her father was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1737. His grandfather, Henry Reynolds, emigrated from Sussex, England in about 1678. There is probably no connection to the famous Reynolds families, which came from Patrick County, Virginia. Margaret Norton was Amy Reynolds' mother-in-law. Her family was also from Chester County, PA, as were the Brown families that are connected to both the Reynolds and the Norton families. Mary Brown married William Reynolds and Elizabeth Brown married Edward Norton but, we have no facts to show that Mary and Elizabeth were related.